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ABSTRACT

Supervision in schools today requires a team approach. A professional supervisor will respect the professional status of the school staff and will encourage each member to perform leadership tasks. Educational leaders should keep informed in their field and endeavor to improve their supervisory methods. They should use current techniques to provide continuing education and professional growth opportunities for the staff. They should be aware of the trend toward competency-based education of all school personnel and consider methods of implementation. (PF)

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS
SUPERVISORS SECTION

Jade Room, Waldorf Astoria
Tuesday July 9, 1974

In considering the topic, The Role of the Supervisor in Professional Growth and Development, five assumptions were made:

1. Schools exist for children - for their growth, development and pleasure.
2. The development of a student takes place as he interacts with other students and with teachers, around certain materials and learning opportunities referred to as the curriculum.
3. Teachers, principals, superintendents, librarians or media specialists, counselors, supervisors (generalists or specialists) are professionals with specialized education, a code of ethics and a desire to be self-directing.
4. The role of those of us assembled in this room, regardless of the title we hold, is to work with other school personnel to help plan and implement a program that provides for those learning opportunities which contribute to the growth, development and pleasure of the students.
5. You and I frequently ask ourselves questions such as:
   (a) What is supervision and am I really a supervisor?
   (b) What are the areas of responsibility or tasks for which I am accountable?
   (c) How do I perceive my supervisory behaviors and how are my behaviors perceived by others?
   (d) How can I keep abreast of current developments and assist in the facilitation of growth and development of others?

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These questions served as the framework for organizing my presentation into four parts.

Part I will be a brief review of the purpose and process of supervision and will consider the question, "Who is a Supervisor."

Part II will be concerned with identifying areas of responsibility of the supervisor.

Part III is a description of various approaches or patterns of behavior utilized by supervisory personnel in the discharge of their responsibilities, and an examination of factors which influence our behavior.

Part IV will focus on the unique role of the supervisor in professional growth and development and make the distinction between <u>being a supervisor</u> and <u>being a professional supervisor</u>.

I will try periodically to help you know where I am and to assure you "that this, too, will come to an end."

Part I THE NATURE OF SUPERVISION

The term, <u>supervision</u>, has many different meanings. Each person who hears or reads the word interprets it in terms of his past experiences, his needs and his purposes. A person who views himself as a supervisor may consider supervision as a positive force for program improvement. One teacher may view supervision as a threat to his individuality, whereas another teacher may think of a supervisor as a source of assistance and support.

A review of the literature, an examination of organizational charts and job descriptions for school personnel in a school system and a survey of titles of persons assembled in this room would yield a proliferation of titles for persons employed as supervisors. In situations where titles are the same, responsibilities may differ. Why does the term, <u>supervision</u>, have so

many connotations? Why is there such a variation in titles as well as responsibilities of persons who are involved in supervision? Many explanations can be offered.

Unfortunately, supervision and supervisor may have a negative note because of the way supervisors discharge their responsibilities. The size of the school system or the school, increased demands upon the school, lack of professional personnel, the growing complexity of the educational processes and a host of other explanations could be cited for variations in meanings and titles employed. Lewis and Miel, in the 1972 publication entitled, Supervision for Improved Instruction, report:

> "A more fundamental explanation of the profusion of titles and the resulting confusion in duties to be performed by various officials lies in the failure of the education profession to employ terms precisely. Not only do people use such key words as curriculum, instruction and teaching differently, they also frequently forget to make simple and necessary distinctions between functionary and function - for example, between supervisor and supervision, between teacher and teaching." (p. 39)

Lewis and Miel further state that "No functionary performs one sole function." Perhaps the statement can be tested by asking the question, "Is the function of a library supervisor administrative or supervisory?" Is your role to administer or supervise, or do both?

Sergiovanni and Starratt, in the 1971 book entitled, Emerging Patterns of Supervision: Human Perspectives, refer to "Behaving in an administrative way and behaving in a supervisory way." Deciding on what constitutes supervisory behavior helps us to realize the scope and breadth of supervision. They state further that (and I quote) "Supervision is a process used by those in schools

who have responsibility for one or another aspect of the school's goals and who DEPEND DIRECTLY UPON OTHERS to help them achieve these goals." If this definition of supervision is accepted, who are the functionaries? All personnel (superintendent, principal, teacher, librarians, counselors, non-professional personnel, etc.) are viewed as supervisors at one time or another. Therefore, supervision today is not the province of a particular person or a particular position, but is a natural mode of behavior for ALL who work with and are a part of the human organization of the school. New functionaries are emerging. Increasingly, teachers within an individual school are assuming the function of supervision. Resource persons within the school and outside the school are assisting with the supervisory function. The complexity of providing instructional leadership and carrying out the varied aspects of a school program is such that no individual can be expected to do everything in an adequate manner.

SUPERVISION IS A TEAM APPROACH AND REQUIRES THE EXPERTISE OF MANY PERSONS. SUPERVISION IS A PEER RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH MEMBER OF THE TEAM ASSUMING LEADERSHIP depending upon the situation and the appropriateness of the unique talents of each at a given time. You may know individuals who function as if supervision is something <u>done</u> to others by a wiser or more experienced individual. Hopefully, this concept or practice has vanished. Supervision is <u>not</u> working <u>on</u> others or working <u>for</u> others, but working <u>with</u> others. Supervision is now viewed as:

Helping others to increase in self-direction

Helping individuals to understand and accept themselves and others

Helping people hear each other

Helping people become more creative

Helping people reach agreements

Helping people coordinate energies.

Part II TASKS OF THE EDUCATIONAL LEADER
or
AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY OF EDUCATIONAL LEADER

What are the tasks of an educational leader? Specifically, what is your responsibility as a supervisor? As I identify the tasks or areas of responsibility, I hope you will reflect upon your own position and decide to what extent this is your responsibility. Which tasks consume most of your time? Which tasks cause you the greatest concern, anxiety or even frustration? I will identify twelve tasks. Since these tasks are self-explanatory, I will not comment on each.

1. Establishing goals for the school in view of societal values and the needs of the citizens.
2. Recruiting, selecting and assigning school personnel.
3. Securing and allocating the financial resources to implement the school program.
4. Identifying and accepting responsibility for the legal aspects of the school operation.
5. Providing space, facilities and equipment for school operation.
6. Providing leadership for curriculum development.
7. Providing leadership for the improvement of teaching and learning.
8. Conducting, encouraging and assisting with research and experimentation.
9. Disseminating and communicating information about the school program.
10. Providing leadership for the development and use of natural, human, and social resources.
11. Creating an open environment of human relationships for determining direction in a change-oriented society.
12. Providing leadership for the continuing professional development of all school personnel.

Hopefully, you are involved in all of these activities. You either assume responsibility for or assist and support others. You may have additional tasks which should be added to this list.

Part III SUPERVISORY BEHAVIORS
(Ways of Working, Leadership Patterns)

As we discharge our responsibilities, what is our pattern or behavior? I am referring to different approaches supervisors employ.

One approach is referred to as directive or telling. This pattern of behavior is characterized by the supervisor identifying a problem, considering alternative solutions, choosing one of them and then telling others what they are to do. The members of the group may be considered but do not participate. Coercion may or may not be used.

A second pattern of behavior is persuasive or selling. The supervisor makes the decision but tries to persuade others to accept it. He points out how he has considered all the significant factors including the interests of the members and states how the members will benefit from carrying out the decision.

A third approach is disscussive or testing. The supervisor identifies the problem and proposes a tentative solution. He requests reactions from those who will implement the decision bu the supervisor makes the final decision.

The fourth approach is consulting or manipulating. The members of a committee have a change to influence the decision from the beginning. The supervisor presents a problem and relevant background information. The group is invited to increase the number of alternative actions to be considered but the supervisor selects the solution HE or SHE regards as most promising.

A fifth pattern of supervisory behavior is supportive or joining. The supervisor participates in the discussion as a member, is open to ideas and agrees to abide by and assist with carrying out the decision the group makes.

What determines our style? What factors influence the pattern of behavior we use? There are three important kinds of forces which determine our individual style.

1. FORCES IN THE SUPERVISOR

The first is the forces in the supervisor - our value system. How strongly do we feel that individuals should have a share in making the decisions which affect them? How convinced am I, as a supervisor, that the official who is paid or chosen to assume responsibility should personally carry the burden of decision-making? What is the relative importance that I attach to organizational efficiency and personal growth of the persons with whom I work?

A second force in the supervisor is his confidence in the group members. Supervisors differ in the amount of trust they have in other people. After considering the knowledge and competence of a group with respect to the problem, a supervisor may (justifiably or not) have more confidence in his or her own capabilities than those of the group members.

Another force in the supervisor is his or her own leadership inclinations. Maybe some of us feel more comfortable in "telling" or we may prefer the "joining" or team role.

Another force in the supervisor which influences style is his feelings of security in uncertain situations. The supervisor who releases control over the decision-making process reduces the predictability of the outcome. Supervisors who have a greater need than others for predictability and stability are more likely to "tell" or "sell" than to "join."

2. FORCES IN CO-WORKERS

Other forces which influence our individual style are those in our associates or co-workers. Before deciding how to work with a certain group, the supervisor will want to remember that each member, like himself, is influenced by many personality variables and expectations. The supervisor can permit the group greater freedom if his co-workers have:

-relatively high needs of independence

-a readiness to assume responsibility

-an interest in the problem and consider it important

-understanding and identification with the goals of the organization

-the necessary knowledge and experience to deal with the problems

-an expectation to share in decision-making.

3. FORCES IN THE SITUATION

A third set of forces includes those that reside in the situation. Some of the critical environmental pressures on the supervisor include:

(a) The problem itself. Do the members have the kind of knowledge which is needed? Does the complexity of the problem require special experience for a one-man solution?

(b) The pressure of time. The more the supervisor feels the need for an immediate decision, the more difficult it is to involve other people.

But the successful supervisor can be characterized neither as a strong leader nor as a permissive one. He is one who is sensitive to the forces that influence him in a given situation and one who can accurately assess those that should influence him.

The key problem of those in positions of educational leadership is to function in such a way that two goals are achieved - the goal of productivity and the goal of human satisfaction.

Part IV THE UNIQUE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR IN PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (Are you a Supervisor or Are you a Professional Supervisor?)

Securing agreement on the tasks which supervisors perform and describing ways of working as an educational leader may not be difficult. Answering the question or making the distinction between a supervisor and a professional supervisor may be more difficult or even threatening.

The word, professional, has been talked about for a long time in education. As a group and as an individual, do we really know how to behave in truly professional ways? Jack Frymier, in an ASCD publication, The Supervisor: New Demands, New Dimensions, states that "any person or any group which is truly professional is characterized in six different ways."

1. The first and probably the most important characteristic (according to Frymier) of any persons who are truly professional is that THEY PROVIDE AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE FOR OTHER PEOPLE. The service is imperative. Others cannot get along without it.

Do supervisors provide an essential service for teachers and others with whom they work? According to Frymier, the answer is "Yes." Teachers want and need experienced help. They cannot accomplish their own tasks in a changing educational world without the necessary assistance which only competent supervisors can provide.

2. The second characteristic of any persons or any group members who are truly professional is that THEY HAVE A METHODOLOGY WHICH IS UNIQUE AND PECULIAR TO THAT PROFESSIONAL GROUP. Do supervisors have a methodology which is unique and peculiar to that professional group? Frymier says "Probably yes."

3. The third characteristic of persons who are truly professional is that they build their practice upon research. Do supervisors have a research base upon which they can build their practice? Again, Frymier responds, "Yes"

and "No." There is an extensive research base regarding learning and teaching behavior yet we know very little sound, research-supported base of supervision theory. Our posture and positions have been essentially folklore, personal experience, philosophy and psychology. Increasingly, we are drawing upon concepts from the behaviorial sciences to guide our behavior.

4. The fourth characteristic of persons who are truly professional is that they make judgments and decisions which affect the lives and well-being of those they serve. Perhaps this is an area that should concern us. Can we reassess the process of decision-making? Does our process really take advantage of others?

5. The fifth characteristic of a professional group is that they have a CODE OF ETHICS. The purpose of the code is to give direction and guidance to those persons who want to function in truly professional, truly ethical, truly effective ways. Is there a statement of ethical principles to guide the thought and action of supervisors? Frymier says "Yes" if we accept the CODE OF ETHICS OF THE EDUCATION PROFESSION but "No" if we refer specifically to the supervisory group.

6. The sixth characteristic is that those groups which are truly professional use the POWER OF THE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION TO IMPOSE A DISCIPLINE UPON THE MEMBERSHIP, TO INSIST THAT EVERY MEMBER ADHERE TO THE ETHICAL WAY. What is our response? "ABSOLUTELY NOT" What guides us in admitting individuals to the profession? What gives direction to our certification practices?

I mention these six criteria because I believe very strongly as we consider our role in providing for the professional growth and development of others, we must first begin "at home." We need to assess our own professional qualifications, competencies, skills, knowledge and take necessary steps that will move us toward becoming a truly professional group.

THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR IN PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IS A DUAL ONE. First, we have a responsibility to continue our own professional growth and development and secondly, we have a responsibility to help other professionals to continue to grow and develop. One role of a professional in any occupation is to keep current his knowledge about his chosen field.

As one example, one area that is progressing at a healthy rate is competency-based education. What do we as supervisors know about competency-based education? It has been reported that 500 teacher education programs claiming to be competency-based are in the process of becoming so. Teacher education programs which are competency-based usually possess similar characteristics. For example, competency-based programs contain explicit statements of competencies. They contain provisions for accounting for individual differences among students (assuming that it is a competency-based teacher education program.) These provisions often take the form of instructional modules. Faculty members in competency-based programs assume a consultant role rather than an information giver. They focus on the needs and desires of participants. The programs are field-based. Evaluation focuses on mastery of important competencies without regard for time restraints. You may add other characteristics of competency-based programs.

While competency-based programs for teachers are growing rapidly, programs for helping supervisors with requisite supervisory competencies are practically non-existent. This gap is already causing some noticeable effects. Among the effects are:

1. Supervisors are unable to provide leadership among teachers whose competencies exceed their own.

2. Supervisors are not able to employ competency-based procedures for staff development. (Individualization programs, developing modules, and deciding how to function without regard to time restraints.)
3. Teachers who participate in competency-based programs revert to traditional approaches when they do not have the support of the supervisor.

The point that I am emphazing is that one of our roles is to keep informed - keep up to date on current development in the field. I used competency-based education only as an example.

Earlier reference was made to the confusion which results in our failure to employ terms precisely. We use many terms or labels in referring to programs designed for promoting, fostering and facilitating the growth of others. Have you ever heard someone say, "I'll see you at 'in-service' on Thursday"? We sometimes use the term "in-service training". One principal stated, "I challenge anyone to try to 'train' me." I heard a new phrase last week - "in-service straining." The use of the term, in-service education, has two disadvantages. First, it indicates a break in continuity since we talk of preservice and inservice and secondly, it has come to be equated with an array of courses under local system or university auspices.

Other terms used include staff development or personnel development. Again, the purpose is to foster professional development of ALL PERSONS involved in the educational program. Many states throughout the country are using the term, staff development, as State Departments of Education are encouraging local school systems to develop local plans of staff development which reflect cooperation of local school systems, State Department of Education and teacher

education institutions. At a recent meeting in Georgia, a prominent educator was describing the proposed state plan for staff development. Upon the completion of his speech, a recently retired colleague of mine greeted the speaker. In their conversation, the speaker said, "Johnnye, what do you think of staff development?" My friend replied, "I'm for it. That is what I worked at for almost fifty years." Needless to say, the prominent educator was speechless. A new label for a concept which supervisors have percieved as one of their functions for some time.

More recently, increasing reference is being made to the use of the term, continuing education. The term has gained considerable use because it suggests continuity in the development of a person rather than education divided into unrelated segments. (So much for the terms used in referring to activities designed to promote professional growth.) More attention should be given to the components of such programs and criteria for assessing our efforts in providing for professional growth and development.

Gordon Klopf, in an article entitled "Helping Adults Change", has identified four major factors to consider in developing competencies and behaviors in people. First, we need to provide opportunities for helping others and ourselves gain understanding and awareness of self and of how others perceive us. How strong is our ego? What are our coping processes? What are our needs for security? We readily note that this process requires skill in consulting. To understand self and how one is functioning, calls for some kind of feedback on performance. You can name other ways. I would challenge you to assess your professional activities to determine if they assist you and others to become aware of self and gain understanding of others.

A second factor, according to Klopf, that should be considered in designing a staff development program is an opportunity to gain a commitment, to

change, to acquire an attitude, an interest, a concern. This component implies that we are assisting with problems which have been recognized but equally important are our ways of working to sensitize our colleagues to new concerns or new problems.

The third factor relates to providing opportunities for gaining knowledge, principles and concepts. What are some creative ways of helping individuals gain knowledge?

The fourth factor relates to the opportunities to have experience involving interaction and skill. We need the opportunity to practice new behaviors, test our skills.

There are many current developments or approaches in staff development that perhaps you are employing which meet the four criteria previously mentioned. One process is interaction analysis. Many individuals and groups have developed a variety of analytical matrices and methods for analyzing verbal and nonverbal behavior in the classroom or in staff development sessions. Many of these devices were designed to help any one of us move more independently toward self-analysis and gain skill in analyzing the dimensions of our group efforts. I will not attempt to identify individuals or groups who have designed instruments, packages or minicourses. If you are interested in a description of some of these devices and more data regarding the source, please review the 1973 ASCD publication prepared by Fred T. Wilhelms entitled, Supervision in a New Key.

As you reflect upon the kinds of activities utilized in your system for staff development, how much attention is being given to other devices such as microteaching, videotaping, laboratory exercises, opportunities for teachers to take initiative and responsibility, the employment of a variety of group activities such as role playing, simulation and other creative problem solving

methods. Do we take time to assess our skills as status leaders or to be increasingly concerned about the roles of members in a group or to take time to explore ways in which we can help nonfunctional members or so called "problem members" - dominator, silent members, those who create conflict become more functional members.

Successful programs for continuing education is not dependent upon what the supervisor does at the meeting but what the participants do. I hope that participants in your programs are actively involved and not cast into a listening role.

As educational leaders, we need to cultivate new skills and sensitivities. Maybe some of us are called autocratic when in reality we have a desire to function in such a way to facilitate group discussion and promote a free flow of ideas but we are just awkward in the style we use.

In designing continuing education programs, hopefully, consideration is given to a variety of approaches, a balance of individual and group work.

Were there professional activities in your system which were:

1. Task-centered?
2. Idea-centered?
3. Problem-centered?
4. Production-centered?
5. Skill-centered?
6. Policy-centered?
7. Appreciation-centered?

Central to a continuing education program, staff development, personnel development or in-service education (if that is your choice) is the existence of a

professional growth center manned by a staff of specialists. The center provides many services as assistance in specific skills, video and audiotaping, micro-teaching, interaction analysis. The center offers opportunities not only to teachers but to leadership personnel such as administrative and supervisory personnel. The center operates in several ways. One area offers opportunities for individuals. It offers programs for groups. In addition to providing a delivery system, it serves as a resource for the display of the newest instructional materials and equipment. You, as persons who would be responsible for such centers, can cite many other possible uses of a professional growth center. The center is an invaluable resource for individuals and groups. In summary:

1. Supervision today is a team approach and requires the expertise of many persons as they work cooperatively to provide for learning opportunities for students and other school personnel.

2. Supervision is a peer relationship with each member of the team assuming leadership depending upon the situation and the appropriateness of each at a given time.

3. A major responsibility of educational leaders is to be involved in a program of continuing education and to assist others in designing programs for self-renewal and continuing education.

4. In this age of accountability, we need to assess our supervisory behaviors, ways of functioning and strive to practice new behaviors in the discharge of responsibilities.

5. With the national trend toward competency-based education of all school personnel, how are we "gearing" up for this change? What do we know about competency-based programs? What are the implications for staff development for all school personnel? What are the implications for certification standards based on specific criteria as standards of measurement? Can we identify the specific competencies needed by the supervisor?

6. As a truly professional supervisor and as a member of a truly professional organization, we face a great challenge. The challenge is to reaffirm our commitment to supervisory behaviors or practices that will develop self-understanding, foster individuality in teachers, allow for self-fulfillment and provide opportunities for growth and ability to live and work harmoniously with one's self and others?

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